

## Artistry of the Everyday

Lisa Bernasek

*Foreword by Susan Gilson Miller*

*Photographs by Hillel S. Burger and Mark Craig  
Rubie Watson, Series Editor*

The Peabody Museum's collection of arts from the Berber-speaking regions of North Africa opens a unique window onto Berber life, and its collection of arts from the Tuareg regions of southern Algeria rivals that of major European and North African museums. World-traveling Bostonians and Harvard-trained anthropologists gathered most of these beautifully crafted objects in Morocco or Algeria in the early twentieth century and later donated them to their present home in Cambridge.

In *Artistry of the Everyday: Beauty and Craftsmanship in Berber Art*, anthropologist Lisa Bernasek gives an insightful overview of Berber history and culture, focusing on the rich aesthetic traditions of Berber craftsmen and -women. She also tells the stories of the collectors whose generosity enhanced the holdings of the Peabody. In a final chapter, she looks at Berber arts in the present day, examining how traditional arts are being used in new forms by Berber artists in North Africa and Europe.

From ancient times to the present day, working with limited materials but an extensive vocabulary of symbols and motifs, Imazighen (Berbers) across North Africa have created objects that are both beautiful

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and practical. Intricately woven textiles, incised metal locks and keys, striking silver and enamel jewelry, painted pottery, and richly embroidered leather bags are just a few of the art objects that are featured in this volume's exquisite color photographs.

As Susan Gilson Miller writes in her Foreword, "Berber arts must be acknowledged . . . as a vibrant expression of a people who are heirs to a unique historical experience." Lisa Bernasek spent two years living as a Peace Corps volunteer in a village in southeastern Morocco. Her experience there and in subsequent years studying Berber cultural identity in Morocco and Paris allows her to skillfully weave history, culture, and craftsmanship into a compelling portrait of a people and their living artistic traditions. In *Artistry of the Everyday*, Bernasek brings the Peabody Museum's Berber collections to life.

**LISA BERNASEK** received her Ph.D. from the Department of Anthropology, Harvard University. This is her first book.

**SUSAN GILSON MILLER**, director of the Moroccan Studies Program at Harvard University, is the author of *Disorienting Encounters: Travels of a Moroccan Scholar in France in 1845–1846*.

Cover illustration: Clove necklace, Kabylia, Algeria. Photograph by Mark Craig © the President and Fellows of Harvard College.

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